

# Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

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7th Congressional District of Maryland  
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## *A message from Congressman Elijah E. Cummings*

*It is both a privilege and honor to represent you in the United States Congress. I will continue outreach efforts to further inform you of legislative action in Congress and its impact. I welcome your advice. Government "by the people" is the cornerstone of my legislative philosophy.*

**Elijah E. Cummings**  
**Member of Congress**

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## **REP. CUMMINGS CHALLENGES WISDOM & COST OF SOCIAL SECURITY "PRIVATIZATION" PROPOSAL**

**"Long-term financing of Social Security presents significant challenges, but there is no immediate threat to our Senior Citizens' checks. The Trust Fund is not in a state of crisis,"** Congressman Cummings reassured a Baltimore gathering of concerned citizens July 23.

Relying on certified projections by the Trustees of the Social Security Trust Fund (including the Secretary of the Treasury), the Congressman laid out the challenges posed by the projected retirement of large numbers of "baby boomers" during the next few decades:

1. Payroll taxes currently are sufficient to pay all benefits until the year 2016 without using the Social Security Trust Fund's U.S. Treasury bonds for that purpose.
2. Because of the growing number of Americans who will be retiring, the Fund will be required to draw down its assets in order to balance the books during the years 2016 – 2038.
3. If we do not act now to provide greater support for the Social Security Trust Fund, the Fund's reserves will be exhausted in the year 2038.
4. After 2038, payroll taxes will still cover about three-quarters of the Fund's annual obligations. The challenge is deciding upon the most fair and effective way of covering the shortfall after that time.

Congressman Cummings expressed serious misgivings about the "privatized" individual stock market accounts proposed by the Bush Administration.

The Congressman was especially concerned about the impact on the Social Security Trust Fund of withdrawing at least 2% of the 12.4% that American workers and employers currently contribute to the Trust Fund in payroll taxes.

**"That unwise proposal would take \$1.1 Trillion out of the Trust Fund over the next ten years,"** the Congressman observed. **"It would jeopardize long-term benefits, increase the risks that workers would face and accelerate our course toward what truly would become a Social Security funding 'crisis.'"**

**"Elderly and disabled Americans – as well as surviving children – need more security, not more risk,"** Congressman Cummings concluded. **"We should be putting more money into the Social Security Trust Fund – not removing funds, as the President proposes."**

## **BALTIMORE CITY TO OFFER HOUSING COUNSELING**

Prospective homeowners seeking assistance through SELP are now required to complete housing counseling prior to contract signing. The counseling session is required to protect buyers from flipping and other fraudulent practices.

The Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development and the Baltimore Urban League have partnered to provide a series of free homebuying workshops. All workshops will take place at the Baltimore Urban League, 512 Orchard Street, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Workshop dates include: August 8, 22; Sept. 12, 26; Oct. 10, 24, Nov. 7, 12; and Dec. 5, 19. Reservations are required. Call the Urban League at 410-523-8150, ext. 246.

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## COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS BILL MOVES FORWARD IN HOUSE

### Cummings Amendment Would Target Aid to "Economically-Disadvantaged Areas"

On July 25, the House Government Reform Committee approved an amended bill [H.R. 2291] authorizing a five-year extension of the Drug-Free Communities Act. Upon final enactment, the Act will authorize more than \$400 Million in federal matching grants to community anti-drug coalitions that work to prevent and treat substance abuse by the nation's young people.

Congressman Cummings, senior Democrat on the Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & Human Resources Subcommittee, succeeded in amending the draft legislation to assure that "economically disadvantaged areas" will receive priority in the award of the federal anti-drug grants.

**"The problem of substance abuse hits hardest in communities that have the least resources with which to strike back,"** Congressman Cummings told the Committee. **"If our national efforts to combat substance abuse are to succeed, we must target our most vulnerable and severely afflicted communities."**

The Drug-Free Communities Reauthorization Act will now be considered by the full House of Representatives.

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## CONGRESSMAN CALLS FOR INCREASED ACCESS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS SEEKING MEDICAL EDUCATION

### Ross University Announces Minority Scholarship Program

At a reception held on Capitol Hill last month for Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Ross University Schools of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine announced the University's newly created

\$2.1 Million diversity and outreach scholarship program established to expand the ability of minority students to become physicians and veterinarians.

Noting statistics obtained from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), Congressman Cummings deplored the fact that African American students continue to be under-represented in the medical and veterinary medicine sciences.

In the year 2000, the AAMC reports, only 1,091 of 16,301 new medical students were African Americans. The total African American medical school enrollment nationwide was only 4,933 out of a total student enrollment of 66,390.

The AAVMC reports that during the 1998-1999 academic year, only 761 of the 9,055 students enrolled in U.S. veterinary schools were minorities.

During the Washington reception, Congressman Cummings commended Ross University President Neal S. Simon for recognizing that minority students can become excellent physicians and veterinarians if given the opportunity.

"This represents our commitment to helping students who have the potential for high achievement and may only lack the means for obtaining their goals," President Simon responded.

The full tuition scholarship awards will be based on prior academic performance, potential to successfully complete the program, leadership in school and community activities, work experience, references, and the recommendation of a member of Congress. The scholarship program is open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

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## HEALTH FAIR AUGUST 20:

Congressman Cummings' Health Fair, will take place on August 20, 11-3 p.m., Boys & Girls Club at Pleasant View Gardens, 1100 E. Fayette Street. For more information, please call: (410) 496-2010.

## ELECTION REFORM

The disenfranchisement of American voters in the last presidential election has strengthened national support for meaningful election reform this year.

On May 9, Congressman Cummings introduced House Resolution 139. Co-sponsored by 26 other Members, the Cummings Resolution calls upon the Congress to formally reaffirm its commitment to "one person, one vote," the 15th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Resolution also condemns election procedures that dilute minority voter participation and allow widespread disenfranchisement.

**"For Americans of every ethnic heritage,"** Congressman Cummings declared, **"the ballot box remains the fundamental protector of our liberty. That is why true election reform is America's foremost legislative priority."**

This week, The National Commission on Federal Election Reform presented its recommendations. Although Congressman Cummings applauded the Commission for addressing this serious issue, he was disheartened by their failure to mandate nationwide election requirements.

The Commission recommendations that the Congressman welcomed include:

- (1) creating uniform statewide standards for counting ballots, voting procedures and the validity of ballots;
- (2) the upgrading of voting equipment and operations, so that all American citizens have equal access to the ballot box;
- (3) making Election Day a national holiday, so that all American citizens can participate in the voting process; and
- (4) requiring access to provisional ballots when a voter's eligibility to vote is questioned.